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Mother, "this craving life-force or desire-soul in us has to be accepted at first, but only in order that it may be transformed."

Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 77

But even when we understand that it is a desire and must be rejected, there are difficulties in discerning if it is a desire leading us to the Divine or if it is purely desire.

One deceives oneself only when one wants to deceive oneself. It is very, very different.

But within, one understands.

Good. Well, then that's enough, if one understands somewhere, that's enough. Is that all? No questions?

Mother, on January 6 you said, "Give all you are, all you have, nothing more is asked of you but also nothing less."

Yes.

What is meant by "all you have" and "all you are"?

I am going to tell you in what circumstances I wrote this; that will make you understand:

Someone wrote to me saying that he was very unhappy, for he longed to have wonderful capacities to put at the disposal of the Divine, for the Realisation, for the Work; and that he also longed to have immense riches to be able to give them, to

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put them at the feet of the Divine for the Work. So I replied to him that he need not be unhappy, that each one is asked to give what he has, that is, all his possessions whatever they may be, and what he is, that is, all his potentialities — which corresponds to the consecration of one's life and the giving of all one's possessions — and that nothing more than this is asked. What you are, give that; what you have, give that, and your gift will be perfect; from the spiritual point of view it will be perfect. This does not depend upon the amount of wealth you have or the number of capacities in your nature; it depends upon the perfection of your gift, that is to say, on the totality of your gift. I remember having read, in a book of Indian legends, a story like this. There was a very poor, very old woman who had nothing, who was quite destitute, who lived in a miserable little hut, and who had been given a fruit. It was a mango. She had eaten half of it and kept the other half for the next day, because it was something so marvellous that she did not often happen to get it — a mango. And then, when night fell, someone knocked at the rickety door and asked for hospitality. And this someone came in and told her he wanted shelter and was hungry. So she said to him, "Well, I have no fire to warm you, I have no blanket to cover you, and I have half a mango left, that is all I have, if you want it; I have eaten half of it." And it turned out that this someone was Shiva, and that she was filled with an inner glory, for she had made a perfect gift of herself and all she had.

I read that, I found it magnificent. Well, yes, this describes it vividly. It's exactly that.

The rich man, or even people who are quite well-off and have all sorts of things in life and give to the Divine what they have in surplus — for usually this is the gesture: one has a little more money than one needs, one has a few more things than one needs, and so, generously, one gives that to the Divine. It is better than giving nothing. But even if this "little more" than what they need represents lakhs of rupees, the gift is less perfect than the one of half the mango. For it is not by the quantity or

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the quality that it is measured: it is by the sincerity of the giving and the absoluteness of the giving.

But in ordinary life, when rich men want to give their wealth to the Divine, and the Divine is not in front of them, then to whom are they to give? They don't know where to give their money!

Yes, but then the question doesn't arise. If they haven't met the Divine either within or without, it doesn't come into question. They are not asked to give to someone they do not know.

If they have found the Divine within themselves, well, they have only to follow the indication given by the Divine for the use of what they have; and if they follow quite sincerely and exactly the indications they receive, this is all that can be asked of them. But until then nothing is asked of anyone.

One begins to ask only when someone says, "Here I am, I want to consecrate myself to the Divine." Then it is all right, from that moment one asks; but not before. Before that, even if you casually pull out a coin from your pocket and put it there, it is very good; you have done what you thought you ought to do and that's all; you are not asked for anything at all. There is a great difference between asking the Divine to adopt you, and making a gesture of goodwill, but without the least intention of changing anything whatever in the course of your life.

Those who live the ordinary life, well, if they make a gesture of goodwill, so much the better for them, this creates for them antecedents for future lives. But it is only from the moment you say, "There, now I know that there is but one thing which counts for me, it is the divine life, and I want to live the divine life" — from that moment one asks you, not before.

Mother, there are people who come here, who have money and are very devoted, who show their devotion,

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but when the question of money comes up, they bargain.... Then how shall we remain on friendly terms with them?

What?

They are devoted, they show devotion...

In what way? By taking from Him all they can?

...but when the question of money comes up, they bargain, they calculate.

I tell you, I have already answered, that's how it is. They come with the idea of taking from the Divine all they can: all the qualities, all the capacities, all the conveniences also, all the comforts, everything, and sometimes even powers, and all the rest. They come to take, they don't come to give. And their show of devotion is simply a cloak they have thrown over their wish to take, to receive. That covers a wide field: from saving one's soul, having spiritual experiences, obtaining powers, to leading a petty quiet life, comfortable — more or less comfortable, at least with a minimum of comfort — without cares, without botheration, far from the worries of life. That's how it is. That covers a wide range. But when they give, it is a kind of bargaining; they know that to obtain these things, it would be well to give a little something, otherwise they won't get them, so they make a show of being very devoted. But it is only a pretence, for it is not sincere.

Unfortunately for them, it deceives no one. It may be tolerated; but that doesn't mean that anybody is deceived.

The bargaining is everywhere, in all the parts of the being. It is always give and take, from the highest spiritual experiences to the tiniest little material needs. There is not one in a thousand who gives without bargaining.

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And the beauty of the story I told you — moreover, there are many others like it here — is just this, that when the old woman gave, she didn't know that it was Shiva. She gave to the passing beggar, for the joy of doing good, of giving, not because he was a god and she hoped to have salvation or some knowledge in exchange.

(Looking at the disciple) There is still some mischief in his mind. Now then, what is it?

I wanted to say that these desires begin with the desire for the work, and this is also guided by the Divine. But when one has understood that now there should no longer be any desire but an absolute giving, still that does not become a giving; and this continues indefinitely. Why?

I can't make out what he means! *(To another disciple)* Translate!

One begins by mixing up desire with one's aspiration...

Yes, that is what Sri Aurobindo has written.

Then, one realises that a desire is mixed up there, but cannot manage to reject this desire.

(To the first disciple) Is that it?

No! (Laughter)

It is and it isn't!

Mother, you said that it may be tolerated, but there is a period of tolerance. But when it goes beyond the period of tolerance and does not want to stop — that's the question.

And so what, what happens?

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He wants to ask what one must do, what should be done?

Ah! at last.

What should be done?... Be sincere.

That's it; always, always, the little worm in the fruit. One tells oneself, "Oh! I can't." It is not true, if one wanted, one could.

And there are people who tell me, "I don't have the will-power." That means you are not sincere. For sincerity is an infinitely more powerful force than all the wills in the world. It can change anything whatever in the twinkling of an eye; it takes hold of it, grips it, pulls it out — and then it's over.

But you close your eyes, you find excuses for yourself.

The problem recurs all the time.

It comes back because you don't pull it out completely. What you do is, you cut the branch, so it grows again.

It takes different forms.

Yes. Well, you have to take it out every time it comes, that's all — until it doesn't come back any more.

We have spoken about it, where was it?... Oh! it was in *Lights on Yoga*, I think. You push the thing down from one part of your consciousness into another; and you push it down again and then it goes into the subconscious, and after that, if you are not vigilant, you think it is finished, and later from there it shows its face. And next, even when you push it out from the subconscious, it goes down into the inconscient; and there too, then, you must run after it to find it.

But there comes a time when it is over.

Only, one is always in too great a hurry, one wants it to be over very quickly. When one has made an effort, "Oh! well, I

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made an effort, now I should get the reward for my effort.”

In fact, it is because there is not that joy of progress. The joy of progress imagines that even if you have realised the goal you have put before you — take the goal we have in view: if we realise the supramental life, the supramental consciousness — well, this joy of progress says, “Oh! but this will be only a stage in the eternity of time. After this there will be something else, and then after that another and yet another, and always one will have to go further.” And that is what fills you with joy. While the idea, “Ah! now I can sit down, it is finished, I have realised my goal, I am going to enjoy what I have done”, Oh, how dull it is! Immediately one becomes old and stunted.

The definition of youth: we can say that youth is constant growth and perpetual progress — and the growth of capacities, possibilities, of the field of action and range of consciousness, and progress in the working out of details.

Naturally, someone told me, “So one is no longer young when one stops growing?” I said, “Of course, I don’t imagine that one grows perpetually! But one can grow in another way than purely physically.”

That is to say, in human life there are successive periods. As you go forward, something comes to an end in one form, and it changes its form.... Naturally, at present, we come to the top of the ladder and come down again; but that’s really a shame, it shouldn’t be like that, it’s a bad habit. But when we have finished growing up, when we have reached a height we could consider as that which expresses us best, we can transform this force for growth into a force which will perfect our body, make it stronger and stronger, more and more healthy, with an ever greater power of resistance, and we shall practise physical training in order to become a model of physical beauty. And then, at the same time, we shall slowly begin and seek the perfection of character, of consciousness, knowledge, powers, and finally of the divine Realisation in its fullness of the marvellously good and true, and of His perfect Love.

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There you are. And this must be continuous. And when a certain level of consciousness has been reached, when this consciousness has been realised in the material world and you have transformed the material world in the image of this consciousness, well, you will climb yet one more rung and go to another consciousness — and you will begin again. *Voilà*.

But this is not for lazy folk. It's for people who like progress. Not for those who come and say, "Oh! I have worked hard in my life, now I want to rest, will you please give me a place in the Ashram?" I tell them, "Not here. This is not a place for rest because you have worked hard, this is a place for working even harder than before." So, formerly, I used to send them to Ramana Maharshi:¹ "Go there, you will enter into meditation and you will get rest." Now it is not possible, so I send them to the Himalayas; I tell them, "Go and sit before the eternal snows! That will do you good."

That's all, then.

¹ A sage of South India who left his body in April 1950. He founded a traditional ashram for meditation and contemplation.